

Indo-US initiative on agriculture

***126. SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ:
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:**

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether under the Indo-US initiative on agriculture, US seed companies are being given access to Indian seed gene bank; and

(b) if so, on what terms?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) No Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

Throwing out of Railway Staff and Passengers from running trains

***127. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) how many cases of railway staff and passengers having been thrown out from running trains have been reported during 2007;

(b) the number of railway personnel and others who lost their lives and were seriously injured in such cases;

(c) the action taken against those responsible for such cases; and

(d) the compensation paid to those who suffered in such cases by Railways and other authorities, cases-wise?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) 09 cases of throwing out of Railway staff and passengers were reported over Indian Railways during the year 2007;

(b) 05 persons lost their lives, 02 persons suffered injuries and 02 Railway employees suffered injuries in these incidents.

(c) All the cases have been registered by the concerned Government Railway Police under the provisions of Indian Penal Code. In all, 34 persons have been arrested and prosecuted by concerned Government Railway Police.

(d) Compensation is paid only after a decree is awarded on a claim filed in this regard in the Railway Claims Tribunal. So far, no decree has been awarded.

Bird-flu Cases

***128. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI:
SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ:**

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether cases of bird-flu have been reported from various parts of the country;

- (b) if so, the details of areas affected by the situation:
- (c) the assessed financial loss;
- (d) whether Government has put in place effective preventive measures; and
- (e) the details of the financial relief provided to the affected farmers?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) The recent occurrence of bird-flu in the country was initially confirmed in some areas of Birbhum and Dakshin Dinajpur districts of West Bengal. Subsequently, some areas in 11 other districts of West Bengal, namely Murshidabad, Burdwan, South-24 Parganas, Nadia, Hooghly, Howrah, Coochbehar, Malda, Paschim Medinipur, Bankura and Purulia were also found to be infected with the disease.

(c) As per industry information, the ex-arm egg prices suffered a decline ranging from 26% in Delhi to about 42.9% in Kolkata between 7th January and 5th February, 2008. During the same period, ex-farm live bird broiler prices declined from 10.3% in Delhi to 64% in Kolkata. The poultry industry has put the loss due to the current episode of Avian Influenza in West Bengal at Rs. 1500 crore over a period of two months.

(d) The Government of India has advised the states to maintain intensive surveillance, report any unusual mortality promptly and pick up samples for testing for the disease. In order to prevent spread of the diseases to neighbouring states, a poultry depopulated zone up to 5 kms. in the border districts of Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa with West Bengal was also notified.

(e) The affected poultry farmers are given compensation at prescribed rates. As per information received from the Government of West Bengal, funds to the Rs. 1100.23 lakh have so far been paid as compensation to the affected families up to 02.03.2008 for the birds culled. Further, Government of West Bengal has decided to grant an interim relief @ Rs. 500/- per household. As on 3rd March 16.70 crores has already been disbursed and further disbursement is in progress.

Special packages for farmers of Kerala

*129. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:
SHRI P. R. RAJAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) how many special packages have been announced by Government for the farmers of Kerala; and
- (b) the details of money and other material distributed by the Centre through the scheme in Kerala?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) On 29th September, 2006, Government of India approved a special rehabilitation package amounting to